setting up of Private Bonded Warehouses by foreign departmental stores, Star Trading Houses , Super Star Trading Houses, Such a warehouses can procure goods from domestic suppliers without payment of excise duty. The domestic suppliers would be entitled usual benefit of exports. The move will encourage domestic sourcing of the products by foreign producers.

(c) and (d) Several initiatives have been taken for export promotion and simplification of procedures which amongst others include bonded warehouses for imports, grant of Advance Licence to Actual Users on positive value addition, fixation of DEPB rates as well as grant of Advance Licences on self certification are decentralisation of powers to licensing authorities.

Trade Agreement for the North-Eastern States

2352. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan for opening another trade agreement in the international boundary of the North-Eastern States; and

(b) if so, where and with which countries and by when will it be started?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No. Sir. At present no fresh trade agreement is under consideration of the Government of India on border trade in the international boundary of the north-eastern States of India.

Trade with Indonesia

2353. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has been received from Indonesia to buy Non-Basmati Rice and Medicines on loan or Counter Trading Basis; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Based on an indication of interest of Indonesian Government to buy non-basmati rice and medicines on counter trade or loan basis a delegation from the Ministry of Commerce comprising Chief Executives of the Metals & Minerals Trading Corporation Ltd. (STC) and The Projects & Equipment Corporation of India Ltd. (PEC) visited Indonesia on 13-14 July, 1998 and had discussions with the Indonesian authorities. Based on the discussions, Ministry of Commerce have sent a proposal in September, 1998 to Indonesian Goverrment for supply of 5,00,000 MT of non-basmati rice through MMTC on deferred payment basis.

STC has also submitted an offer in August, 1998 to Indonesian authorities for supply of pharmaceutical and medical disposable items. Response of the Indonesian authorities on above proposal is awaited.

Industries functioning in Gujarat

2354. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the industries functioning in Gujarat;

(b) how many out of them are functioning by the private companies;

(c) whether the funds are allocated by Government/State Government/ Voluntary organisation to run these industries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government are encouraging the small scale industries?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) In the State of Gujarat, there are a total number of 216318 registered Small Scale Industries units and 2196 medium and large scale sector industries, as on 31.7.98.

(b) All small scale industries units are run by private parties and 2151 large

medium projects are functioning in the private sector.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir. The Government is encouraging small scale sector through a variety of steps like reservation of 821 items for exclusive manufacture in small scale sector, price preference in Government purchase, excise exemption, provision of infrastructure through a Scheme of Integrated Infrastructure Development (IID), provision of transport subsidy in backward area, priority lending by banks etc.

Financial viability of infrastructure sector projects

2355. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per recent reports, it was stated that the lack of financial viability of projects in the infrastructure sector was due to lack of a proper approach on regulatory and policy frame work; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) The Expert Group on commercialisation of Infrastructure Projects under the Chairmanship of Dr. Rakesh Mohan has made several recommendations relating to the regulatory and policy framework for infrastructure projects.

The Government is of the view that a strong regulatory framework is necessary to attract private investment in the infrastructure sector. Accordingly, the Government has implmented a number of recommendations of the Expert Group, including, inter-alia, the establishment of independent regulatory authorities such as Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP). In the context of the power sector, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has been established with enabling provisions to facilitate state governments to set up state regulatory commissions.

Privatisation of PSUs

2356. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new radical formula has been evolved for privatising public sector enterprises to achieve the desired disinvestment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the formulation is fraught with dangers, giving unfettered powers of control of public undertakings to the bureaucracy and eliminating their accountability to Parliament; and

(d) if not, what checks are contemplated on such powers, so as to ensure accountability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SAINGH BADAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Revival of National Instruments Limited and BOGL

2357. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the revival status of National Instruments Limited and BOGL as per the latest proceedings of BIFR;

(b) when were the last BIFR hearing held in the above cases; and

(c) Government's latest stand as promoter vis-a-vis the above hearings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SAINGH BADAL): (a) to (c) National Instruments Ltd. (NIL): The